

## **Wellness and culture travel to bring a new lift to the Finnish tourism boom**

**Finnish tourism options are being expanded through the development of wellness and culture travel destinations for foreign travellers. Finpro's Visit Finland Finrelax growth programme has selected 25 top wellness products, and the Culture Finland programme has selected 20 new top cultural products, from the midst of more than 200 contestants in a product development contest. In the services of the awarded companies, nature experiences are combined with food and wellness treatments, as well as with Finnish sauna culture, the Kalevala, Moomins and Tom of Finland, through to regular local everyday life.**

Finpro's Visit Finland unit is investing strongly in the augmentation of collaboration throughout the entire tourism field, to attract new foreign travellers to Finland. A significant potential for growth is apparent in wellness and culture travel. Wellness travel is the fastest growing form of travel, worldwide, and the amount of completed trips has grown annually by more than 14 percent.

– Tourism is the fastest-growing form of livelihood in Finland and is a significant provider of employment. We encourage companies to develop high-quality products, for various target groups. Thanks to clean nature, year-round nature destinations and the protected national parks, Finland has excellent qualifications to offer wellness for the body and mind. These things—which are ordinary to us—such as exercising in untouched nature, foraging for berries and mushrooms, Nordic food and the sauna tradition are of paramount importance, in being offered as accessible tourism products, says Visit Finland's programme director **Kiti Häkkinen** of Finpro.

– The tourism industry needs attractive types of content, to create a competitive advantage. With development procedures of culture travel, and especially with product contest, we want to particularly activate actors in the creative field in creating culture travel products, says Visit Finland's Culture Finland programme's project director **Susanna Markkola** of Finpro.

The Visit Finland Finrelax and Culture Finland programme's featured top product contests of 2016 had a combined 234 submissions by Finnish companies. Finrelax awarded their star product status to 25 wellness products and also awarded ten entries with an honourable mention. Culture Finland, on their behalf, selected 20 new top products with a cultural emphasis. The awarded products represent Finland as a wellness and cultural travel destination, and the ready products will be sent through Visit Finland's sales promotions to the European and Asian markets. The companies will represent all of Finland, from Lapland to the capital region, and from Finnish Lakeland through to the various archipelagos.

## **Finland is on the upswing as a travel destination**

Finland is more interesting in the world than before. For example, Lonely Planet and National Geographic placed Finland among the 2017 most interesting travel destinations, among others, for nature experiences, unique city culture and because of several events designed for the centennial celebration year of Finnish independence.

– Now is a unique moment to take advantage of this interest, and to significantly develop tourism livelihood. It does, however, require efforts in the product development of culture travel services, since development is still in the initial stage. The goal of the Culture Finland programme is to enforce the cultural image of Finland as a travel destination, and to further the collaboration between cultural and tourism field actors, to create new cultural tourism products which are internationally appealing, Markkola says.

– The goal of the Finrelax programme is to make Finland a top wellness travel destination. Last year, we participated in the product development of the companies and travel areas in the programme. This year, we will invest in sales promotion and marketing, especially in the German and Japanese markets, Häkkinen says.

The winning products were revealed at the Nordic Travel Fair, and will be presented to foreign travellers at the ITB Fair in Berlin, Germany, in March, 2017. The winning companies will receive Authentic FinRelax Experience or Authentic Culture Experience statuses. The products ready for sale will be visibly presented at Visit Finland's marketing and sales promotion procedures, especially in the European and Asian markets.

The Finrelax growth programme is financed by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and the Culture Finland programme is financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and Visit Finland.

### **The Finrelax TOP25 star companies (per region, in alphabetical order)**

#### **Archipelago and coast:**

- **Kultaranta Resort**, Naantali, a high-quality destination in the Finnish archipelago
- **Råmossa Lodge**, Porvoo, tailored nature experiences for all of the senses
- **Silverskär Islands**, Åland, hermit life on your own island

#### **Lapland:**

- **Lapland Safaris**, Levi, Lappish hospitality and the cleanest air in Europe, in untouched landscapes
- **Rukan Salonki/Lapland Safaris/Santa's Hotels**, Kuusamo, wild food, sauna and various nature activities

#### **Finnish Lakeland:**

- **Adventure Apes**, Orivesi, lake swimming around the year, and getting acquainted with the local inhabitants
- **Best Lake Nature Adventures**, Lahti, foraging of nature's goods in the forest and canoeing
- **Frantsila Organic Herb Farm**, Hämeenkyrö, the healing power of herbs and plants
- **Hotel Kalevala**, Kuhmo, fresh air, swimming in clean lake water and fresh, local food
- **Houseboat/Varjola**, Jyväskylä, fishing, river adventures and sauna experiences
- **Karelia Cottages**, Saimaa, peacefulness, silence and relaxing in a Karelian cottage
- **Kyyhkylä Hotel and Manor**, Saimaa, massages and a beachfront sauna, getting acquainted with nearby nature while cycling, walking or canoeing
- **Lahti Region/Visit Lahti**, Lahti, both traditional and modern Finnish treatments near to nature
- **Lakomäki Forest Manor and Spa Hotel**, Kannonkoski, relaxing in a tub beneath the stars and dining experiences by an open fire
- **Linna Hotelli**, Hartola, Päijät-Häme, relaxing, treatments, herbs, local food, nature and fresh air
- **Peurunka**, Peurunka, a wellness retreat, where the sauna and peat are utilised while relaxing
- **Revontuli Resort**, Hankasalmi, sauna experiences in a smoke sauna, electric sauna and in a tent sauna
- **Saimaa Holiday**, Saimaa, a boat trip, relaxing in the sauna and local food
- **Spa Hotel Rauhalahhti**, Kuopio, traditional Finnish smoke sauna nights at Jätänkämppä
- **Travellamo**, Lahti, relaxing of the mind and body in the sauna with vihta (birch whisk) treatments
- **Upitrek**, Wild Taiga, Kainuu, abundant forests, lakes and rivers, as well as a rich tradition and culture
- **Vuokatti Safaris**, Vuokatti, fresh air and water, nature, silence and forest wellness

### The Metropolitan Area:

- **Honkalintu**, Espoo, Nuuksio, an ecological and memorable overnight stay opportunity in a tree
- **Nuuksion Taika**, Espoo, Nuuksio, the magic of the outdoors, sauna, and a lake with a campfire
- **Piece of Forest**, Espoo, Suvisaaristo, getting acquainted with relaxation exercises and nature-based wellness with all of the senses

### FinRelax TOP10 honourable mentions

- **Ski Resort Ukkohalla Paljakka**, Kainuu
- **Nukula**, Oravasaari
- **Luomajärvi Horse Inn**, Ikaalinen
- **Arctic Warriors**, Narkaus
- **Koivulahden Rapukartano**, Vilppula
- **Arctic Superfoods**, Levi
- **Anumati Naturals**
- **Sieniretki (mushroom excursion) Y**, Espoo/Sipoo
- **LomaJoosula and FysioJoosula**, Savukoski
- **Varjola**, Konnevesi

### Culture Finland TOP20 top products (by region, in alphabetical order)

#### Archipelago and coast:

- **Narrative SMAKU walk in Old Porvoo**, Porvoo, a memorable flavour excursion of food and food culture
- **The Song of the Sisters**, Naantali, a guided tour of a medieval abbey church and getting acquainted with local history through storytelling, song and team spirit

#### Lapland:

- **Saunatour - Day as a Finn**, Lapland, traditional and modern-day Finnish experiences in an arctic environment

#### Finnish Lakeland:

- **Culture and Music in Kuhmo, Finland**, Kuhmo, chamber music, Kalevala and bears during the most beautiful part of the Finnish summer, in July
- **Finland's Big Year 2017 - On the birth places of independence**, the birth of independence, Winter War history, Kalevala and Karelianism, the local food culture and way of life
- **Finnish Lake Culture Holiday**, Hotel & Spa Resort Järvisydän, Saimaa
- **Moomin Museum**, Tampere, original works by Tove Jansson, graphic design and miniature models at the Moomin Museum

- **Rug Rag of Memories Weaving Retreat**, Loikansaari, South Savo, holiday life near to nature and weaving on the loom
- **Serlachius Museums, Tour to the Art Town Mänttä**, Mänttä, North Tavastia, local treasures, architecture, lake scenery and forest scents as well as food experiences in Finnish Lakeland
- **Silence with Kantele**, North Karelia, creating your own kantele and getting deep into the secrets of music-making in a silent guesthouse
- **Stop Over Savonlinna Opera Festival**, Savonlinna, an internationally renowned Finnish culture festival
- **Tasting Tampere**, Tampere, tasting great beers, enticing gin varieties, tasty sausage and the rootsy local food of Tampere

#### The Helsinki Metropolitan Area:

- **Cosy Home Dinners - Cosy Finnish Evening**, Helsinki, dinner with a Finnish family, getting acquainted with the Finnish lifestyle
- **Day With a Local**, Helsinki, genuine reciprocity, on culture and learning from cultural differences as well as discussions on interesting topics with a local
- **Guided Art Tours by HKI Art Guide**, Helsinki, gallery tours, art experiences and shared moments over coffee
- **In the Footsteps of Best-known Finnish Architects - Alvar Aalto and Eliel Saarinen 2017**, Helsinki/Lahti/Seinäjäki/Jyväskylä, a tour to get acquainted with the work of famous Finnish architects
- **Remote Helsinki**, Helsinki, a combination of a performance, an excursion, a video game and adventure
- **Sibelius Finland Experience**, Helsinki, Erik Bruun's awarded graphics, Finnish nature images and historic films accompany live violin and piano music in Kansallissali
- **Take a break and Escape to Krapi!**, Tuusula, old and new cultural experiences as well as hand-made delicacies
- **The Tom of Finland Experience**, Helsinki, a guided theme tour of Touko Laaksonen's life phases and the change of society, in the spirit of Finland 100

#### Additional information:

Kiti Häkkinen, Programme Manager, FinRelax programme, Visit Finland, Finpro, tel. 050 453 4720, [kiti.hakkinen@finpro.fi](mailto:kiti.hakkinen@finpro.fi)

Susanna Kyllönen, project co-ordinator, Luova Matka project, Visit Finland, Finpro, tel. 050 346 2768, [susanna.kyllonen@finpro.fi](mailto:susanna.kyllonen@finpro.fi)

Hetta Huittinen, communications director, Finpro, tel. 040 033 9597, [hetta.huittinen@finpro.fi](mailto:hetta.huittinen@finpro.fi)

*Visit Finland, as the national tourism expert and active agent, is responsible for the advancement of foreign travel to Finland. Visit Finland supports companies and groups in the development and marketing of tourism services intended for the international market. The travel income comparable to exports brought to Finland*

by foreign travellers was more than four billion euros in 2014. Visit Finland is a part of Finpro Oy (LLC).  
[www.visitfinland.fi](http://www.visitfinland.fi)

Finpro helps SME enterprises to internationalise, attracts more foreign investment to Finland and increases the flow of foreign tourists into Finland. Finpro is composed of Export Finland, Visit Finland and Invest in Finland. Finpro is a public operator with 240 experts at 37 export centres in 31 countries and 6 regional offices in Finland. [www.finpro.fi](http://www.finpro.fi)

Finpro – growth for Finland